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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/551,581	04/18/2000	Ralf Otto	05552.1442	1852
22852	7590	12/17/2003	EXAMINER	
FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 1300 I STREET, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20005			GORDON, BRIAN R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1743	17
DATE MAILED: 12/17/2003				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/551,581	OTTO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Brian R. Gordon	1743	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 August 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 7-11, 14 and 15 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 7, 8 and 10 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 9, 11, 14 and 15 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>16</u> .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed August 20, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant asserts that independent claim 7 requires that a single plunger opens and closes the cap. The examiner respectfully disagrees the claim only requires a single plunger that can open **or** close a reagent container stopper. As such any device containing an element that can open a container meets the limitation of the claim and on the other hand any element that can close a container meets the limitation of the claim. The term "or" is an alternative phrase which only requires one of the two limitations to be met.

Applicant also asserts that Clark does not disclose the direction in which the carousel moves. Clark discloses that the device comprises "an Indexer which comprises electronics for controlling the motor by the driver. It determines move profiles, which include direction of rotation, number of steps to move and acceleration and velocity parameters." The claim is interpreted to only require a conveying system that is movable in opposite directions. The action that is accomplished by the movement is considered intended use and does not limit structure of the invention as presently drafted in the claims.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 7-8, 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Clark *et al* (USP 5,578,494).

Clark *et al* teach a method and device for opening and closing reagent vials 30, 30', 441. The apparatus includes a cap opener 464 positioned relative to bi-directional rack conveyor 32 (column 4, lines 40-43). The rack conveyor having a plurality of vials and transporting the vials along the test equipment, i.e. pipette probe (column 47, lines 7-24). Clark *et al* teach the pipetting probe integrated with the cap actuator station 464 and system controller such that opening of the reagent cap causes movement to the pipetting probe to begin pipetting and vice versa. The capped-closure 450 for the reagent containers 441 comprise a closure 452 fitting on the opening 442 and a cap assembly 454 and 454(b) of the cap functions as a tab lever (e.g. catch) engaged by the linear actuator. The housing 466 has a bracket 470 for mounting the cap

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actuator station 464 in a fixed position above the reagent carousel 32 (FIG. 3). The cap actuator station 464 further comprises opening pins 472 extending through a pin block 473 and being actuated by the drive motor 468 to move downwardly against the tab lever 454(b) of the cap 454 causing it to pivot on the pin 461 to pull the stopper 454(a) out of the closure 452 and flip the cap 454 from the closed position as shown in FIG. 35 to the desired open position 454' as shown in FIG. 34. The cap actuator station 464 further comprises a cap actuator 474 which includes three valve-shaped heads shown in an inactive position with the opening pins 272 extending downwardly from the pin block 473. The heads of the cap actuator 474 are driven by the drive motor 468 downwardly against the cap 454 to return it from the open position 454' as shown in FIG. 34 to the closed position shown in FIG. 35. This downward motion or positioning is also used in conjunction with the rotational motion of the reaction carousel 32 to cause the heads of the cap actuator 474 to drag along the top of the cap 454 to force it down to the closed position. In operation, the reagent carousel 32 rotates the desired reagent containers 441 (FIG. 32) to an opening position below the cap actuator station 464 for the opening pins 472 to contact the tab lever 454(b) to open the cap 454 to its substantially vertical open position 454' as shown in FIG. 34 and described above. The reagent carousel 32 then rotates the reagent containers 441 to a locking position under the cap actuator station 464 avoiding contact with the opening pins 472, but driving the heads of the cap actuator 474 into frictional contact with the top end of the cap 454 to push it from the open position 454' to the locked-open position 454" (FIG. 32) where the cap 454 is locked in place by an internal spring mechanism (not shown) as described above. In order to close the cap 454 of the capped-closure 450, from either the open position 454' or the locked-open position 454", the reagent carousel 32 moves the reagent

containers 441 so that the top of the cap 454 is moved into frictional contact with either the opening pins 472 or the heads of the cap actuator 474 partially lowered to drag along the top of the cap 454 and overcome the force of the internal spring, thereby returning the cap 454 to a partially closed position or the soft seal position with the stopper 454(a) in the opening of the closure 452 (column 45, line 15-column 46, lines 36).

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 9, 11, 14, and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
3. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The prior art of record does not teach nor fairly suggest a structure for translating movement that includes two rocker arms and a stop rod, the stop rod being connected to and positioned between the two rocker arms, the stop rod also being connected to the pipetting-needle carrier, such that the stop rod moves with the pipetting-needle carrier or that the translating movement structure including a thrust plate and a catch member, wherein the thrust plate is engagable with the plunger, and wherein the catch member is connected to a means for driving the pipetting needle carrier, such that movement of the pipetting-needle carrier in a first direction results in movement of the catch member and thrust plate in a second direction opposite the first direction.

Conclusion

4. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian R. Gordon whose telephone number is 571-272-1258. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, with 2nd and 4th F off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

brg


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700